

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for handling exceptions in a business-to-business transaction, comprising the steps of:

monitoring an internet gateway through which the business-to-business transaction passes for exceptions, wherein if an exception is detected:

automatically locating an authorized representative;
automatically notifying the authorized representative of the exception;
automatically establishing a collaboration session between
representatives of the business-to-business transaction.

2. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of using an intelligent contact manager to automatically locate the authorized representative.

3. The method of Claim 2, wherein the intelligent contact manager comprises the functions of pre-routing, post-routing, customer-profile, computer telephony integration, enterprise-wide reporting, web interaction, remote agent support, voice recognition integration, and workforce management integration.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the collaboration session comprises web collaboration.

5. The method of Claim 4, wherein the web collaboration comprises page sharing, follow-me, form share, text chat, application demonstration, application sharing, and white boarding functions.

6. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of using a unified communication system to automatically notify the authorized representative of the exception.

7. The method of Claim 6, wherein the unified communication system comprises voice messaging, email messaging, and fax messaging.

8. The method of Claim 6, wherein the unified communication system comprises a telephone call, a sequence of contacts, an SMS message to a called party's pager or cell phone, or incoming calls being routed through a series of telephone numbers based on peer, person, or LDAP list.

9. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of detecting the exception by a timer expiration, transaction exception, or network exception.

10. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of handling exceptions corresponding to demand planning.

11. The method of Claim 10, wherein business-to-business (B2B) processing utilizes the engine to perform steps of requisitioning, purchasing, approval, ordering, receiving, distribution, payment, and measurement.

12. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of handling exceptions corresponding to procurement processes.

13. The method of Claim 1, wherein the business-to-business transaction is handled through e-mail and LDAP containing XML data.

14. The method of Claim 1, wherein the exception is handled by e-mail.

15. An apparatus for handling exceptions in a business-to-business transaction, comprising:

an exception detector which monitors an internet gateway through which the business-to-business transaction passes for exceptions;

an intelligent contact manager coupled to the exception detector to automatically locate an authorized representative;

a unified communication system coupled to the intelligent contact manager which automatically notifies the authorized representative of the exception;

a collaboration system coupled to the unified communication system which automatically establishes a collaboration session between representatives of the business-to-business transaction.

16. The apparatus of Claim 15, wherein the intelligent contact manager comprises the functions of pre-routing, post-routing, customer-profile, computer telephony integration, enterprise-wide reporting, web interaction, remote agent support, voice recognition integration, and workforce management integration.

17. The apparatus of Claim 15, wherein the collaboration session comprises web collaboration.

18. The apparatus of Claim 17, wherein the web collaboration comprises page sharing, follow-me, form share, text chat, application demonstration, application sharing, and white boarding functions.

19. The apparatus of Claim 15, wherein the unified communication system comprises voice messaging, email messaging, and fax messaging.

20. The apparatus of Claim 19, wherein the unified communication system comprises a telephone call, a sequence of contacts, an SMS message to a called party's pager or cell phone, or incoming calls being routed through a series of telephone numbers based on availability and schedules.

21. The apparatus of Claim 15 further comprising the step of detecting the exception by a timer expiration, transaction exception, or network exception which is integrated with a workflow management system.

22. The apparatus of Claim 15 further comprising the step of handling exceptions corresponding to demand planning.

23. The apparatus of Claim 22, wherein business-to-business procurement includes business-to-business requisitioning, purchasing, approval, ordering, forecasting, receiving, distribution, payment, and measurement.

24. The apparatus of Claim 23 further comprising the step of handling exceptions corresponding to procurement processes.

25. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon instructions for handling exceptions in a business-to-business transaction, comprising the steps of:

monitoring an internet gateway through which the business-to-business transaction passes for exceptions, wherein if an exception is detected:

automatically locating an authorized representative;

automatically notifying the authorized representative of the exception;

automatically establishing a collaboration session between representatives of the business-to-business transaction.

26. The computer-readable medium of Claim 25 further comprising instructions for using an intelligent contact manager to automatically locate a sequence of authorized representatives.

27. The computer-readable medium of Claim 25, wherein the business-to-business transaction is handled through e-mail and LDAP containing XML data.

28. The computer-readable medium of Claim 25, wherein the exception is handled by e-mail.

29. A computer system for handling exceptions in a business-to-business transaction, comprising:

means for monitoring an internet gateway through which the business-to-business transaction passes for exceptions, wherein if an exception is detected:

means for automatically locating an authorized representative;

means for automatically notifying the authorized representative of the exception;

means for automatically establishing a collaboration session between representatives of the business-to-business transaction.

31. The computer system of Claim 29 further comprising means for handling the business-to-business transaction through e-mail and LDAP containing XML data.

CONFIDENTIAL